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The African-American Image in Art

La Salle University Art Museum

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La Salle University

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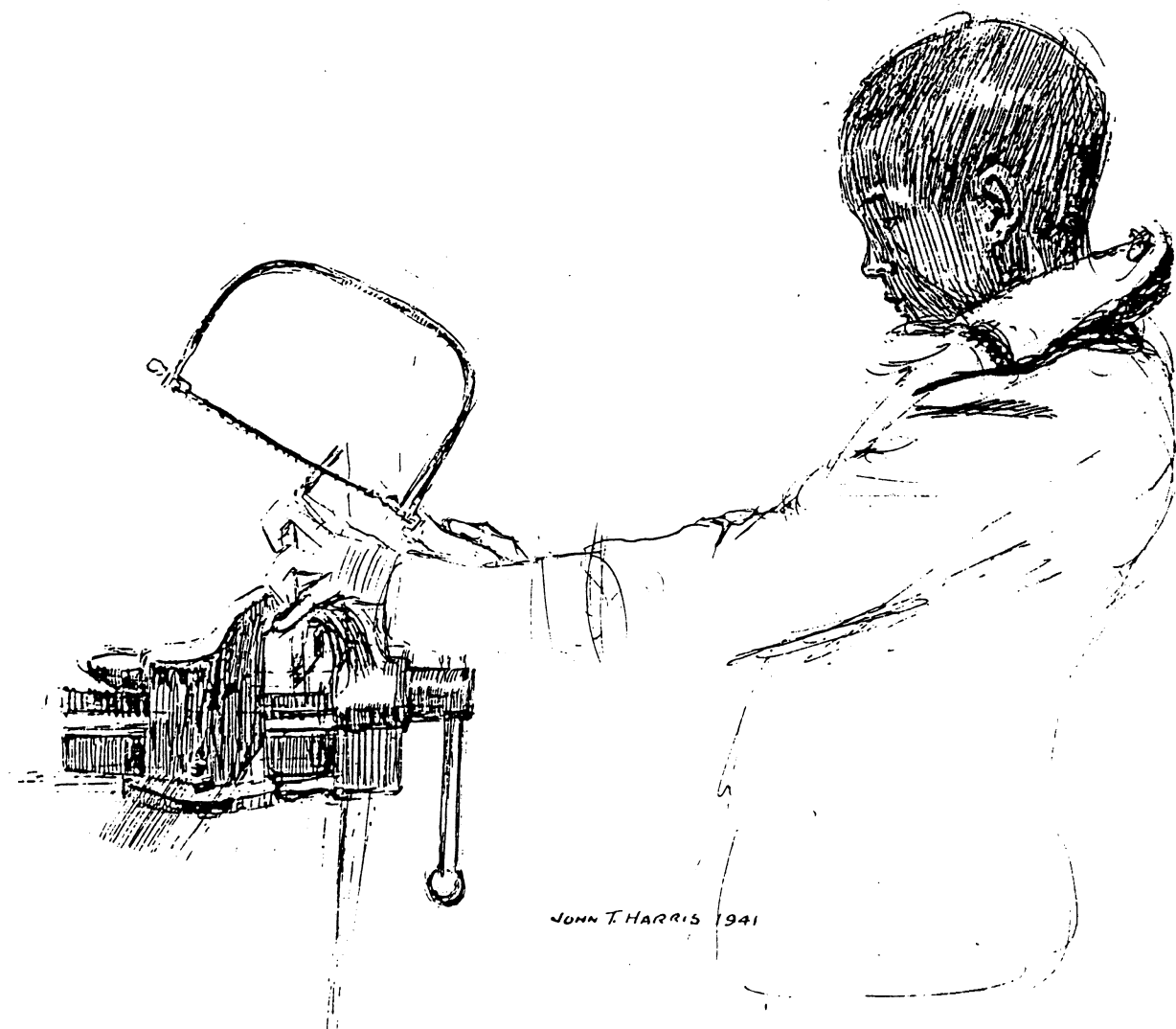
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FEB 1990

The African-American Image in Art



La Salle University Art Museum
February, 1990

AFRICAN-AMERICAN IMAGE IN ART

Coinciding with the recent publication of *The Image of the Black in Western Art* (a multi-volume ongoing project), the La Salle Art Museum, along with a number of larger museums, has chosen to mount a small exhibition of its holdings related to this subject. The exhibition consists of (with the exception of Tanner's *Mary*) twentieth century African-American images by black artists and three white artists, Julius Bloch, Winslow Homer, and Ben Shahn.

While it is difficult to make any generalizations with such a small display, the works here suggest that many of the artists of the first half of this century limited their renditions of the black experience to portraiture and everyday life scenes which often recorded the black engaged in menial labor, other subservient positions or light entertainment. And often the mood of these works seems to be one of dignity and quiet resignation. However, when one becomes familiar with other works by Jacob Lawrence, Julius Bloch, Romare Bearden or Horace Pippin, expressions of suffering and outrage of racial injustices become more evident.

Although individual portraits of famous blacks were occasionally produced the many outstanding accomplishments and talents of African -Americans (as documented, for instance, in the exhibition of *Black Women: Achievement Against the Odds*, on the second floor of the Union building) were not visualized often enough.

While many African-American artists have chosen to work in styles based upon western traditions, more recently some artists such as Romare Bearden, Jacob Lawrence and Elizabeth Catlett have drawn heavily from their African heritage when forming their style. And their works echo the fractured, geometrical forms of African sculpture showing an emphasis on bright patterns of color and angular flat shapes resulting in a semi-abstract but immediately compelling images.

For further reflection on these observations we hope the student will take advantage of the current exhibition at the Philadelphia Museum of Art as well as consult the La Salle library's volumes of *The Image of the Black in Western Art* displayed in this exhibition.

Caroline Wistar

Curator

1. Julius T. Bloch (1888-1966), American
Bobby Fields 1948
Oil on canvas
From the estate of Julius Bloch
2. *Marian*
Oil on canvas
Lent by Benjamin D. Bernstein
3. *I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes Unto the Hills*
Lithograph
From the estate of Julius Bloch
- 3a. *The Man With the Blue Sweater*
Oil on canvas
Lent by Benjamin D. Bernstein
4. *Night*
Lithograph
From the estate of Julius Bloch
5. Study for "Alonzo Jennings"
Brown wash drawing
From the estate of Julius Bloch
6. (Hall cases)
Ed's Boot Black Parlor
In the Park

Neighbors

Waiting for Shoe Shine

watercolors

Lent by Benjamin D. Bernstein

7. *Shoe Shine Boy*

Oil on canvas

Lent by Benjamin D. Bernstein

8. Dox Thrash (1892/93-1965), American

Girl Reading

Carbograph or carborundum print

Given by Benjamin D. Bernstein

9. Elizabeth Catlett (1919-), American

Survivor 1983

Woodcut

Given by Mrs. Patricia Clifford

10. Romare Bearden (1914-1988), American

Louisiana Serenade

Color Lithograph

11. Alan Edmonds (1949-), American

Untitled

Photo-silkscreen

12. Winslow Homer (1836-1910), American
A Shell in the Rebel Trenches
from Harper's Weekly, Jan. 17, 1863
wood engraving
Given by Dr. & Mrs. Benjamin Yasinow
13. *A Bivovac Fire on the Potomac*
from Harper's Weekly, Dec. 21, 1861
wood engraving
14. John T. Harris (1908-1982), American
Boy at Work in Recreation Center
pen and ink
15. *Checker Player at Marian Anderson Playground*
carbon pencil
16. Jacob Lawrence (1917-), American
Builders No. 3 1974
Silkscreen
Given by Edward Bernstein
17. Ben Shahn (1898-1969), American
Engraved by Stefan Martin (Contemporary), American
Martin Luther King
Wood Engraving

18. Paul Keene (1920-), American,
The Sorceress
Oil on canvas
Lent by Benjamin D. Bernstein

19. Henry Ossawa Tanner (1859-1937), American
Mary 1898
Oil on canvas